

**TOWN OF LUDLOW PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
February 26, 2026**

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**PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS**

Raymond Phoenix – Chairman (Present)  
Christopher Coelho – Vice Chairman (Absent)  
Joel Silva (Present)  
Kathleen Houle (Absent)  
William Ellison (Present)  
Haley Rivers, Associate Member (Absent)

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room.

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**Site Sketch – Pauldin, LLC c/o Dinis Baltazar, 83 Carmelinas Circle (Assessors' Map 26, Parcel 7C) (construction of building addition with associated site improvements)**

*The applicant was not present for the appointment.*

Mr. Phoenix read the letter from Nina Fazio requesting a continuation to March 12, 2026, to allow for the presentation before the full board. The Board agreed to the continuance.

*Documents: Request to continue public meeting from Nina Fazio (February 25, 2026)*

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**Consent Agenda:**

*The Board approved the Consent Agenda under unanimous consent.*

- ◆ FILE Mail Item 06. - Legal Notices from surrounding communities
  - ◆ APPROVE/SIGN Minutes of January 29, 2026, and February 12, 2026
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**ANR – Armand Deslauriers, 1252 East Street (Assessors' Map 31, Parcel 27)  
(combine 2 deed parcels into single lot; cut out 2 conforming lots from said tract)**

*Armand Deslauriers and Dan O'Brien – Smith Associates were present for the appointment.*

Mr. O'Brien explained that all the pins have been found and/or set.

Mr. Silva **MOVED** to endorse the ANR in the standard form as submitted.

**SECOND** Mr. Ellison.

**3-0 in Favor.**

Mr. O'Brien informed the Board that a definitive subdivision application will be submitted shortly and requested clarification regarding four (4) proposed estate lots within the subdivision. He asked whether

approval of the estate lots as buildable lots could be addressed as part of the Definitive Subdivision public hearing, or whether separate special permit applications would be required at a later date.

Board members discussed the procedural approach and indicated that the special permits for the estate lots could be submitted concurrently with the definitive subdivision application. While separate special permit applications would be required for each of the four lots, the hearings could be consolidated and conducted simultaneously under one legal notice, consistent with the Board's practice for applications requiring multiple approvals. The Board agreed that combining the hearings would streamline the process and would not alter abutter notification requirements.

*Documents: Master Application; Plan of Land, East Street – Ventura Street Ludlow, Mass. owned by Hemlock Ridge, LLC (February 18, 2026)*

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### **Mail Item 07 - Email from Bud Ellison re: open space preservation meeting with Kestral Land Trust and the Conservation Commission**

Mr. Ellison elaborated on ongoing efforts to explore housing initiatives that balance the Town's need for additional housing with the preservation of open space, agriculture, and recreation areas, and stated that the goal is to maintain the community's character while identifying creative options for landowners and the Town moving forward.

The Board also discussed an upcoming meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 1st and clarified that the Conservation Commission meeting is open to the public. It was noted, however, that if a majority of the Board's members were to attend, it could constitute a quorum and raise Open Meeting Law considerations. To avoid this issue, either two or fewer members should attend, or the Board would need to properly post the meeting to ensure compliance.

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### **Housing Production Plan**

Mr. Carpenter explained that the Housing Plan was originally presented in draft form in October. It was noted that the only revisions since that time were administrative updates, including adding Bud Ellison and Haley to the document and updating the Town Planner designation. No substantive changes were made to the plan.

The Board was asked to consider a vote to approve the plan. It was noted that the Select Board is expected to receive the same presentation at its first meeting in April and will also need to vote on the plan. Final approval will then be required from the State.

With three members present, the Board discussed whether to vote that evening, noting that no additional public hearing was required as the prior public outreach meeting satisfied that requirement. Members expressed a preference to wait until more Board members could be present to participate in the vote.

The Board agreed to continue the matter to the next meeting in hopes of having greater attendance. It was noted that there are two meetings scheduled in March and that delaying the vote would not negatively impact the timeline, as the plan cannot be submitted to the State until both the Board and the Select Board have approved it.

### **Community Preservation Act**

The Board discussed the Community Preservation Act (CPA), noting that it has been considered by the Town multiple times over the past several decades but has not been adopted.

The item was placed on the agenda at the request of Mr. Coello following the previous meeting. After brief discussion, the Board agreed to table the matter to the March 12 meeting to allow for further discussion, particularly in Mr. Coello's presence.

Several members expressed general support for revisiting the CPA, acknowledging its potential value for funding open space, housing, and other community initiatives. Members noted prior frustration with unsuccessful attempts to pass the measure at Town Meeting but indicated a willingness to make another effort.

Discussion also addressed anticipated challenges, particularly public concerns regarding the financial impact. It was noted that the CPA is funded through a surcharge (commonly 2–3%) on real estate tax bills, not a direct increase in the overall tax rate, and that exemptions can be structured, including an exemption on the first \$100,000 of assessed value and other statutory options.

Members further observed that past opposition often focused on the housing component and misconceptions regarding the beneficiaries of CPA-funded housing initiatives. It was acknowledged that earlier skepticism about the program included uncertainty regarding state matching funds; however, over time, other municipalities that adopted the CPA have demonstrated positive financial returns through the state match.

The Board agreed to continue the discussion at the next meeting and explore whether additional outreach, including input from other communities that have adopted the CPA, may be beneficial.

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### **Harris Brook Elementary School Update**

*Mickey Buhl and Michael Bertini were present for the appointment.*

Board members discussed traffic flow and safety concerns at Harris Brook, Baird, and East Street Schools during dismissal. Observations indicated that Harris Brook experiences significant congestion due to limited side streets and no traffic lights, while Baird and East Street have some mitigating features but still face occasional backups. Strategies considered included adjusting cones and exits, bus scheduling changes, and the potential use of police or trained safety officers to manage traffic. It was noted that no short-term solution will fully prevent street backups, but deploying safety officers could improve student safety, with long-term solutions requiring town-wide planning and possible infrastructure changes.

The Board discussed ongoing traffic congestion and safety concerns during school dismissal at Harris Brook and other district schools. Members noted that geographic constraints, limited street access, and

high car volumes make a fully effective solution unlikely without significant investment. Various strategies were considered, including:

- Engaging the original school designers for engineering input or funding contributions.
- Deploying a safety officer at key intersections on a trial basis to monitor traffic flow and safety.
- Conducting a traffic engineering study to evaluate feasible improvements.
- Considering small-scale improvements or phased solutions, recognizing that each school may require unique approaches.

It was acknowledged that bus schedule improvements have helped reduce delays but will not eliminate traffic congestion entirely. Long-term solutions may require broader town-wide planning, infrastructure changes, or additional resources. The Board emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts among the school, safety officials, and town departments to pursue practical, incremental improvements while maintaining safety as the primary focus.

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### **Remote participation**

The Board discussed the implementation of remote participation for meetings. Members noted that while the town has installed a computer and webcam setup to connect via Microsoft Teams, the current microphone setup is inadequate for clear audio, particularly for public participation. Key points included:

- Technical limitations of the current system, including reliance on a webcam microphone and lack of proper audio quality.
- Need for clear procedures for muting participants, managing public access, and posting meeting links in agendas for transparency.
- Concerns about information security, as the Teams login credentials are currently posted in plain view, creating potential liability.
- The Board agreed that remote participation should be accessible, especially for board members and public hearings, but emphasized that the system must be secure, reliable, and manageable before full implementation.
- Members suggested observing how other boards implement hybrid meetings and making incremental improvements, with a focus on both accessibility and operational security.

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The Board discussed the upcoming Citizen Planner Convention, scheduled for March 21 in Worcester at Holy Cross. Several members expressed interest in attending, with some noting it would be their first time. The convention provides breakfast and lunch, a variety of educational sessions throughout the day, and the opportunity to earn Level 1 or Level 2 certificates in planning-related topics. Sessions cover subjects such as subdivision rules and regulations, nonconforming uses, local permitting for clean energy, Complete Streets programs, and the Climate Resilience Playbook.

The cost of attendance has increased to \$105. While past budgets had funds to cover board member training, current budget limitations may restrict reimbursement. Members also noted the availability of traffic studies through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), highlighting ongoing studies for East Street and other development areas, including intersections such as Chapin and Fuller and Greenstead Grove.

Discussion also addressed attendance at town-wide planning-related meetings and the need to comply with Open Meeting Law requirements. Members agreed that if attendance at an event might constitute a quorum, a public notice should be posted to ensure transparency. Additionally, examples of innovative public engagement, such as East Longmeadow's "Who Wants to Be a Zoning Expert?" program, were mentioned as a model for interactive learning and public participation.

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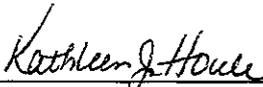
Mr. Ellison **MOVED** to adjourn.

**SECOND** Mr. Silva.

**3-0 in Favor.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

APPROVED:



Kathleen Houle, Secretary

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(All related documents can be viewed at the Planning Board Office during regular business hours.)